

Fermilab Employee Advisory Group Meeting

May 26, 2011

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM, One North

AGENDA TOPICS

1. EAG Updates and new topics
2. Effectiveness of communicating the future of Fermilab
3. EAG responses to the Management Curriculum Committee recommendations
4. Additional recommendations from the sub-committee
5. Draft supervisor effectiveness survey
6. Future EAG meetings

MEETING SUMMARY

Tevatron Shutdown Event on September 30

The shutdown will be simultaneously broadcast from CDF and DZero. There will be a lab-wide celebration that afternoon. It was noted that there is also a grassroots effort at CDF to have their own party later on that evening, and that has been coordinated with the afternoon event. It will be open to all employees. It was asked whether the community be also be invited—though no specific plans have been made, this also seems like a good idea. Pier will talk about both the contributions of the Tevatron and the future of the lab. EAG members were asked whether this was a big enough event, and they responded that they believed so and would like to see details when planning was further along.

New Senior Management Liaison to the EAG

Bruce Chrisman is now the official senior management liaison to the EAG. He will serve as a formal member of the EAG and will meet with steering committee monthly before each meeting to help ensure that management is responsive to the EAG. This will help to raise topics to the EAG from management as well. Pier and Young-Kee will continue to attend as many EAG meetings as they are able.

Communicating the Future of Fermilab

Bruce Chrisman raised the question of whether non-scientific staff are getting the information and communication they need to understand the future of the lab. The following comments and discussion were provided.

- We do hear stories, and there is worry about the future which has resulted in resigning staff and in decisions of potential new staff accepting jobs to come to Fermilab.
- Those of us who are working on new projects are busy, but those working on the accelerator are very nervous, they have not heard about plans for their future.

Those who can are moving on to other areas, but those who are working their jobs to the very end are quite worried.

- People outside the lab are more concerned with the lack of funding from Congress than a direct result of the Tevatron closing.
- The bigger question is whether people understand the big picture beyond the lab. We are communicating as best we can, the bigger concern is the stuff we do not have control over. Congressional and DOE decisions are beyond our control and cannot be prepared for. These things can happen overnight and people understand that and it makes everyone unsettled. This is especially true with funding for high-profile and expensive projects. The overall national uncertainty overshadows everything. We know we have the support of the lab, but much of the worry is outside the lab.
- Do rank and file employees understand the shift from the energy frontier to the intensity frontier? Not really.
- Many folks out in the field are not getting any kind of communication whatsoever from their management. Groups are merging and no information is getting out, folks are just guessing. Group leaders are just not communicating with their staff.
- One EAG member noted that this is not always true, and has a section head that really values communication. They used slides created for a Fermilab Citizens Advisory Board Meeting to communicate to people about the future of Fermilab. Staff had been questioning the future and really appreciated the information. Unless someone is taking that on, however, it is not happening.
- The Office of Communication does a great job, but people are just not reading the articles as often as they should.
- There is no broad corporate message about the future that is getting through. Maybe part of this is because we had so much certainty for so long that this type of uncertainty is hard to get a handle on. To some degree, this is a new paradigm but we don't have a strong sense of what is actually going to happen. Even after approval, lots of projects don't move forward.
- Should the EAG be doing more to help communicate? This is not the EAG role, but the EAG discussion and recommendations about the situation and potential actions are quite helpful.
- Bruce asked if it was a reasonable conclusion that there is an overall level of understanding of the future of the lab but it is not really filtering down to how it affects individual programs and individuals? In general, yes. People directly related to the Tevatron really don't have any sense of their future. People are racing to get jobs in other divisions before the end happens. They have had no personal communication at all, people are now waiting for another buyout.
- Supervisors may be avoiding these conversations because they don't have the skills or the information they need to have this conversation.
- The baby-boomer generation has been here a long time and they are worried they will be let go just before they reach retirement age. They also feel they have worked at one skill for a long time, and this limits their future prospects.
- Pier noted that he went about as far as he could communicating under DOE rules, saying that about 100 jobs will be affected. The likely path is a voluntary separation, which will have uncertain results with regard to who will take it, so it is

difficult to communicate. However, the complete lack of communication does need to be fixed. We have two big projects, LBNE and Project X, both approximately 1.5 billion dollars. There are also a dozen or so other smaller scale projects and more projects emerging all the time. So the short term is pretty set, but the longer term is more uncertain.

- People really do not know about all these smaller projects. We printed 20,000 copies of the Frontiers report. Did we not send these out to all employees? No.
- Are the 100 jobs eliminated because of the Tevatron or funding? A bit of both, if we had more funding we could likely transition more jobs to new projects. It is already an achievement that we are going to a flat budget and not seeing the 20% decrease that would result from shutdown of the Tevatron. This year we got \$15 million less than requested, next year is likely to be 2% lower. Congress is trying to cut budgets, and the Administration's focus is on energy science.
- It is interesting how people see what is in the newspapers more than they see communication at the lab.
- Not that many people have visited the web page on the future of Fermilab.
- We need to get managers communicating to people about where to get information, younger scientists are using the Facebook page.
- What is the cultural problem that results in people not seeking out information that they want and need, even though that information does exist? People are passive consumers of information, they want to be fed. Clearly what we know that works is cascading down information and having supervisors deliver it directly.
- We need to create materials that are accessible to the sections so that this information gets transmitted. It needs to be from someone they trust.
- Video is a good way to do this too, but still hard to get people's attention.
- How do we get all the key information people need in one place?

EAG responses to the Management Curriculum Committee Recommendations

The EAG reviewed draft recommendations prepared by a subcommittee.

Requiring Mandatory Training

The subcommittee combined first and third recommendations of the Management Curriculum Committee (MCC) on whether training should be required. The consensus is that training should be mandatory for new supervisors, and that the three main classes should be required regardless of how long you have been a supervisor. This requirement gets everyone on the same page with regard to expectations.

RECOMMENDATION: All agreed with this recommendation.

Time Needed to Implement Recommended Mandatory Training

It would take about 4 years for all existing supervisors to take these classes based on

the current schedule of four sessions per year, and it would require 15 sessions to get it done in a single year. Realistically, it would take five years to get this done, given available resources and new supervisors requiring training. The following discussion points were raised:

- In setting priorities for managers should we go top down or bottom up? Bosses need to be trained first because they set the culture—but then it will take a long time before lower level managers to be trained.
- We might want to consider prioritizing by a combination of top down and largest number of direct reports.
- Everyone automatically resists training at Fermilab, so we can't rely on supervisor preferences.
- The Computing division went through it as a group and that made a big difference there.
- Another issue is to look at whether we have too many supervisors. One of the reasons is that so many of the supervisors still do technical work, so the supervisory duties are not paramount and that is why we need so many supervisors. That is their primary love, why they come to work. People don't necessarily like professional managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The lab should establish three years as a goal to have everyone trained in the three basic courses.
- The lab should develop a strategy to identify what it would take to achieve that three-year goal.
- WDRS and section heads should work together to prioritize timing and order of training.
- Training of groups together should be approached wherever possible.
- The lab should also study the current number of supervisors and create a strategy to lessen this number in proportion to the total staff.
- The EAG wants to send the message that mandatory training of supervisors is a very high priority and would like to see a high-level commitment to this.
- The EAG would like a specific response from the directorate as to how they will proceed with mandatory training of existing managers.

360 Degree Feedback,

There is support for this idea but it but needs further evaluation and study, and other priorities have come first. The following discussion points were raised:

- ES&H has been using a tool like this for some time and it is working to get broader input. It is a simple software program not used in performance reviews. The person selects who they want feedback from and it is totally confidential. Kay Van Vreede does not think this was a good system, as it missed a few key hallmarks of a 360 degree system. People generally picked their friends and it was abandoned when no longer effective. If we are going to use a system, it must be professionally developed. Coaching and development plans are needed and it needs to be geared to the organization, confidential, and comprehensive.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The EAG agreed with the need for a professional program and supported the subcommittee recommendation, recognizing that it will take some time to implement.

Continuing Education

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The EAG support supported the subcommittee recommendation as written.

Supervisory Potential

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The EAG support supported the subcommittee recommendation as written.

Additional Recommendations from the Sub-Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Items 4 and 5 should move forward as part of the recommendation as aspirations.
- Item 7 was also supported. The lab needs to identify how many non-supervisory project managers actually exist as many project managers are also already supervisors.

Supervisor Survey Questions

The draft survey was reviewed and discussed. It is important not to lead people and to ensure confidentiality. We want to elicit real data that will help us. The following revisions to the survey were decided:

- Do not include optional questions
- Create a combined technical/skilled trade category
- Simplify years of service to less than 5, 6 to 20, and more than 20
- Add a line on number of employees supervised
- Combine divisions/section to make it simpler, with fewer choices
- Ask if they are a supervisor
- Ask if they supervise supervisors

Supervisor Survey Implementation

- Need to communicate the context, confidentiality and purpose of the survey clearly and tie it back to the employee focus groups
- Use *Fermilab Today* link to the survey, provide very clear information, and run it all week

Scheduling Future Meetings

- Next meeting is Tuesday, June 21. The time was changed from 1-4, to 11-1 to accommodate senior management schedules.
- The EAG will explore meeting on a standard day each month, the steering committee will establish a process to find a good recurring time for meetings.

EAG Accomplishments

- The EAG will establish a list of accomplishments by the next meeting.
- Doug Sarno will create a draft document for the steering committee to get this item started.